

## Ultraviolet Radiation



1. The sun supports life on earth. Part of sunlight is ultraviolet (UV).
  - UV is a normal part of sunlight.
  - UV comes from tanning beds.
  - UV also comes from welding machines and lasers.
2. There are three types of UV:
  - UV-C is absorbed by the ozone layer. It is not risky.
  - UV-A and UV-B are not absorbed by the ozone layer.
  - UV-B can cause sunburns.
  - UV-A can cause skin cancer.
  - Both UV-A and UV-B can harm your eyes and vision.
3. Being exposed to small amounts of UV for many years is risky.
  - You have a higher chance of developing a **cataract**. (This is clouding in the lens of the eye.)
  - You may also have damage to the **retina**. (This is the sensitive nerve tissue inside your eye.)
  - Damage to the lens or retina can be permanent.
4. The effects of UV are "cumulative."
  - The longer you are exposed to UV the greater the risk is to your eyes.
  - No one knows for sure how much UV for how long will cause damage.
5. You should wear good sunglasses when outside.  
Also wear a hat or cap with a wide brim when outside.
6. Here is a list of some things you do that need sun protection:
  - Working outside
  - Playing in sports outside
  - Taking a walk
  - Running errands
  - Other things that you do outside in the sun

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7. Good sunglasses should:

- Block out 99 to 100% of both UV-A and UV-B
- Screen out 75 to 90% of visible light
- Be matched in color
- Have no distortion
- Be gray, green, or brown

8. Children and teenagers often spend more time in the sun than adults. They also need sun protection.

9. Here is a checklist. You may be at higher risk if:

- You spend a great deal of time outside.
- You spend time skiing, hiking, or at the beach.
- You use a sunlamp.
- You live in the mountains.
- You live in the U.S. Sunbelt.
- Your job involves UV radiation.
- You take drugs (prescription or over the counter) that increase your sensitivity to UV.
- You have had cataract surgery in one or both eyes.

Please call the VA Northwest Network Call Center at 1-888-233-8305 with any problems or questions. They are available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. They can advise you and can contact the eye doctor on-call for emergencies